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MIMES

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Marcel Schwob

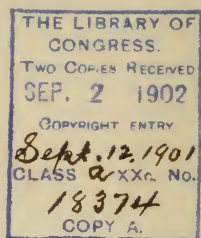
MIMES

WITH A PROLOGVE AND
EPILOGVE BY MARCEL
SCHWOB--DONE INTO
ENGLISH BY A. LENALIE



PORTLAND, MAINE
THOMAS B. MOSHER

M D C C C I



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THESE MIMES ARE
DEDICATED
TO
ALPHONSE DAUDET

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FOREWORD

*On the mouldering citadel
of Troy lies the lizard like a
thing of green bronze. The
owl has built her nest in
the palace of Priam. Over
the empty plain wander shep-
herd and goatherd with their
flocks. . . .*

OSCAR WILDE.

FOREWORD

F Marcel Schwob's purpose was to "create or re-create individual life, practising the art of differentiating existences," it is also true that his re-creations are a part of his own heart's life; and this, he says, in a letter to the writer, "is why the collection of *Mimes* is so slender. That life has worn away, and the renewal of the work would be like copying what I once lived through long ago."

So these twenty-and-one prose-songs, marking a stage of his own literary development, are reiterations of a dead and vanished time, reincarnations of the Greek soul,—a faithful recapturing of that old Greek life, seemingly so unconscious of a future here or elsewhere.

FOREWORD

Perfectly moulded masks are they, as of a lifeless visage impressed in clay and revived in bronze, reproducing a people, with their customs, dress and mythological beliefs: a series of medallions threaded on a golden-linked chain of bygone environment; each medallion a poem wafted by a "frail Tartarean shade" from the underworld of wandering phantoms, where abide the spirits in meadows that bloom not, beneath skies without moon.

Oscar Wilde, in his *Intentions*, that charming and only book of Essays which he saw fit to bring together, has perfectly expressed this enduring quality of work, that is

*"Carv'd with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain."*

"Those who live in marble, or on painted panel, know of life but a

FOREWORD

single exquisite instant, eternal indeed in its beauty, but limited to one note of passion or one mood of calm. Those whom the poet makes live have their myriad emotions of joy and terror, of courage and despair, of pleasure and of suffering. But those who walk in epos, drama, or romance, see through the labouring months the young moons wax and wane, and watch the night from evening unto morning star, and from sunrise unto unsetting can note the shifting day with all its gold and shadow. For them, as for us, the flowers bloom and wither, and the Earth, that green-tressed Goddess as Coleridge calls her, alters her raiment for their pleasure. Movement, that problem of the visible arts, can be truly realized by Literature alone."

A dim-lit shade like that of temple

FOREWORD

interiors, ever enwraps the soft-gliding throng of this vague spirit realm from whence these *Mimes* are shapen. Daphnis, "the forester, known from here to the heavens, keeper of a fair flock," and gentle Chloe, "the fresh in youthful beauty," called up from their deep sleep, falteringly issue from the dream-portal of Erebus, pathetic wraiths of a past love, with ardent souls extinguished by forgetfulness. Nor substance of tears or laughter nor of aught material are they,—mere tender fancies, yet we love the filmy figures, moon-flowers of the imagination, that float mid the starless plains of this gray Kingdom of Seeming, from which the aroma of youth and passion has fled, as float the transparent drifts of formless white clouds on a twilight sky.

Anon, summoning these shades of

FOREWORD

the numbered centuries into the whiteness of our earth-sphere, mid the stir of the sunlit isles of Sicily, in the days when the pearly city of Mitylène gleamed radiant in the young-orbed world, the author renews the animate scenes and throbbing human passions of golden-hearted Greece, evolving clean-etched, realistic pictures that live with us in such vivid portrayal that we say of them: these are not stark and stiffened personages, but vital entities,—“a poor Greek like me.”

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote to Marcel Schwob from Vailima, July 7th, 1894:—“Thank you for having remembered me in my exile. I have read *Mimes* twice as a whole; and now, as I write, I am reading it again as it were by accident, and a piece at a time, my eye catching a word and

FOREWORD

travelling obediently on through the whole number. It is a graceful book, essentially graceful, with its haunting agreeable melancholy, its pleasing savour of antiquity. . . . So here with these exquisite pieces, the xviiith, xviiiith, and ivth of the present collection. You will perhaps never excel them; I should think the 'Hermes,' never."

And to William E. Henley, in one of his last letters, he advised the translating of *Mimes*, saying it would be work worthy of such a poet. But, however poetic the manipulation of the translator, the rhythmic, undulating prose of the original can not be fully indicated in English; yet, so beautiful is the essence of the text, that the immortal presence of true inspiration cannot fail to shine forth.

FOREWORD

Doubtless Herondas (or Herodas), whose *Mimes* were brought to light some years since in the British Museum, himself inspired by Sophron, "the master of the form," has served in return as an inspiration for this little group of *Mimes*.¹

"Two thousand years old, they

¹ The *Mimiamboi* are assigned to the third and even the second century B. C. They consist of 700 lines divided into seven distinct poems in choliambic or Scazon iambic metre, forming a kind of dramatic idyl dealing with scenes of ordinary domestic life, mostly humorous and all but one in dialogue form. Modern knowledge of the *Mimes* dates from 1891, when what remains of them was discovered among the papyri in the British Museum. An autotype facsimile was published by the Museum authorities in 1892, and various translations into French and German have since been made. See *Studies of the Greek Poets* by John Addington Symonds, (Third edition, 1893,) Vol. II, pp. 221-239, where a complete prose version of the text will be found.

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are as young as yesterday. Though they have survived the searching test of time they have been unseen of mortal eyes for countless centuries. . . . In the *Mimes* of Herondas is the revelation of a lost *genre* as well as a vivid and familiar image of ancient life. Even in the golden age of Greek literature the mime was practised and esteemed."

From the specimens cited by Mr. Whibley it is evident that they were not intended for dramatic representation.

"But," he continues, "if Herondas, in spite of Pliny's criticism, was not wont to polish and refine his style, he had a marvellous talent for presentation. His characters breathe and live; his simple situations are sketched in a dozen strokes, but with so vivid a touch that they are perfectly realised. The material is drawn from the common-

FOREWORD

place of life, but it is handled with so just a sense of reality that two thousand years have not availed to tarnish the truth of the picture. The book is as modern as though it had been written — not recovered — yesterday. The emotions which Herondas delineates are not Greek, but human. . . . What can touch the sympathies more nearly than these sketches of life? Not even the most real of American realists could sniff therein the pitiful odour of romance or classicism. Their familiarity is, in a sense, more thrilling than the most exquisite verse. Here, indeed, is the Greek revealed in dressing-gown and slippers. . . . As the world was never young, so it will never grow old. The archæologist devotes years of research to compiling a picture of Greek life, and the result is *Charicles* — a solid and unrelieved

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mass of 'local colour.' . . . Herondas, on the other hand, presents not a picture, but an impression; and one mime reveals more of life as it was lived two thousand years ago than the complete works of Becker, Ebers and the archæologists." All of which might have well been said of Schwob's *Mimes*.

And as "the chatter of women has changed no more in a thousand years than the song of birds," so, through the long sweep of the cycles, human nature has remained unchanging: the cook, such as he is in *Mimes*, tyrant of his domains, bullies his assistants and prates of his culinary skill, just the same to-day as in the distant yesterday; the sailor boasts his sea-lore and cherishes his superstitions of the sirens that will lure him to watery deeps, while "excellent lovers" wander

FOREWORD

on the strand with tender caressing, and those who have loved and lost lament their dead with weary unrest. Thus "The mimes are not statues of the fifth century, but rather exquisite terra-cottas, quaintly and daintily fashioned, such as prudery commonly withdraws from public exhibition, and softened by that touch of nature which makes fiction real, and renders the old new again. And it gives us good hope of the future. If Herondas be found, why not Sophron, or Menander, or the priceless Sappho herself?"¹

True to the key, withal, is Marcel Schwob, yet modulating his notes to the delicately attuned ears of the modern listener, an exemplifier of all that is ideal and realistic in the Greek

¹ See *Studies in Frankness*. By Charles Whibley. 8vo. London, 1898. (Pp. 145-160.)

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temperament and atmosphere, in this little masterpiece whose least word "carries acute suggestions of classic scenes and classic characters."

In an article written for the July issue of the *Mercure de France*, in 1893, when *Mimes* first appeared, Téodor de Wyzewa, one of its most able contributors, asserts that the inception of a surer and finer literature than that which had preceded these times is heralded by the advent of this book: one which might be designated, provisionally, as an *imitative* literature. He holds that decrease of inner originality and increasing anxiety for exterior originality were the marked features constituting the history of contemporary art for the five years previous to this time, and that, as a result, artists and writers had lost discrimination, style, and sense of pro-

FOREWORD

portion and perspective, vainly searching for sensationalism and imagining that *originality* was their first duty; whereas it should be but an adjunct, as the perfume of a flower is an accessory to its beauty.

Therefore their works were lacking that tranquil unrestraint and indefinable light and atmosphere which so permeated those of their predecessors, who possessed traditions of style, — and notably, that most important of all, which is the *imitation* of a predetermined model chosen from among ancient writers such as appeal to us most understandingly. Thus did Ronsard, who would have been dismayed had any one accused him of not imitating the old-time poets, and, as is well known, the sole literary ambition of Racine was to imitate Euripides.

And quoting de Wyzewa's own

FOREWORD

words: — "This gracious little book of *Mimes* by Marcel Schwob is for him but a pastime, — the charming diversion of a poet's soul; I imagine he simply intended to continue the series of *Mimes* written by that ancient poet Herondas, and, in truth, he has done this efficaciously: each of his little prose poems affords us a simple, living image of Greek customs, an antique, faint and subtle image, so to speak, somewhat effaced as if the ages had considerably softened its colours. Still it is immediately seen that these poems, which might have been taken at first as translations of the lost works of Herondas, or of Theocritus, are additionally impregnated with a spirit entirely modern; and under the dainty garb fashioned after this form, and in these ancient portraits, we detect the extraordinary

FOREWORD

qualities that impart an original savour to M. Schwob's writings.

"In the *Roi au Masque d'Or* and other of his works published in the *Mercure* series there is a sort of tempered tragedy which I do not remember ever to have encountered elsewhere. Never has any one been so facile in the realm of the improbable and supernatural: never before has anyone rehearsed such strange visions in so calm a voice, relieved only by a subtle symbolism that but serves to heighten the effect.

"In imitating these *Mimes* of Herondas M. Schwob has thrown into still clearer relief the versatile features of his originality, already so clearly recognized. And in none of his other works does he so thoroughly demonstrate himself in his double character of poet and savant."

FOREWORD


Throughout all his writings M. Marcel Schwob's language gives evidence of the highest literary culture, his vivid imagination lending great charm to his talent: minute observer, yet eminently a *fantaisiste*, he mingles narrative and reverie with the utmost delicacy and skill. And as his soul-life has evolved through the years' intellectual developing, so the radius of his thought has enlarged from complex materialism to a view-point of tender, optimistic mysticism.

A. LENALIE.

MIMES

*habe tibi quidquid hoc libelli,
qualecumque quod o patrona virgo,
plus uno maneat perenne saeclo.*

PROLOGUE

 HE poet Herodas, who lived in the isle of Cos, under the reign of good king Ptolemæus, wafted unto me a frail Tartărean shade who had once loved on this earth. So my chamber was filled with myrrh ; and a faint breath chilled my bosom. My heart became like to the heart of the dead ; for I had forgotten my present existence.

The fond spirit shook from her tunic's fold a Sicilian cheese, a light basket of figs, a tiny amphora of black wine and a golden cicada. Forthwith I was seized with desire to write these *Mimes* and my nostrils were assailed by odors of oil from new wool, unctuous fumes from the kitchens of Agrigentum

PROLOGUE

and acrid exhalations from the fish-stalls of Syracūsæ. Through the white streets of the city passed the cooks, their chitons high-girt, savory-throated flutists, wrinkled procuresses and dealers in slaves, their cheeks puffed out by reason of their gains. Across the blue-shadowed pasture-lands ceaselessly sped the piping herdsmen bearing glistening waxed reeds, and dairy-maids crowned with red flowers.

But the fond spirit heeded not my verses. She turned her head away into the night and shook from her tunic's fold a golden mirror, some full-blown poppies, and a gerbe of asphodels, offering me one of the rushes that grow on the banks of Lēthe. So was I filled with an instantaneous longing for the wis-

PROLOGUE

dom and knowledge of things terrestrial. Now saw I, in the mirror, the wavering, transparent reflection of Pandean pipes and drinking-vessels, high, pointed hats and fresh countenances with mobile lips; and the innermost meaning of objects became apparent to me. Then I lay me down upon the poppies and ate of the asphodels and my soul clasped hands with the shade that we might descend together toward Taenărus.

Long time the slow-gliding, fragile wraith led me on midst the black verdure of the lower regions where our feet were stained with saffron-flowers. And there deep regret overcame me for the isles of the purpled sea, the Sicilian strands, rayed with fine sea-grasses, and the

PROLOGUE

whiteness of the sunlight. The fond spirit understood my wish. She touched my eyes with her shadowy hand, that I saw Daphnis and Chloe again ascend to the Lesbian fields. I was conscious of their grievous woe in tasting the bitterness of rebirth within the earthly night. And to Daphnis the kind goddess gave the form of a laurel, to Chloe the grace of the green osier-beds. Then knew I the calm of plants and joy of motionless stalks.

Hence I wafted toward the poet Herodas other *Mimes*, perfumed with the perfumes of the women of Cos and those of the wan flowers of the lower regions and the pliant wild earth-grasses.

Thus willed this frail Tartărean shade.

M I M E I



HOLDING a silver eel in one hand, thus, and in the other my long-bladed kitchen knife, I am returning from the port to our house. The former was hanging by its gills at the stall of a fish-woman whose shining locks were perfumed with sea-oil. With ten drachms I bought out the fish market this morning: save this eel there were merely some small dabs, and a few thin pipe-fish and sardines not worth offering to the soldiers on the ramparts. Meanwhile I am going to open him; he writhes like the thong of a leathern whip; then I shall dip him in the brine and promise the fork to the children who light the fire.

MIMES

MIME — Bring the charcoal! blow on
I the embers: they are of poplar-wood and the sparks will not beget rheum. Fool, thy head is empty as the swollen bladder of this conger-eel: shall I not grind it to the earth? Give me the osiers. Go, get thee to the ravens! This sage is worthless, Glaucon. I will fill thy mouth with it when thou art on the gibbet. And may'st thou swell to bursting like a sow's paunch stuffed with rich meal! Give me the hooks! the rings! And as for thee, though thou lick the mortars to the last morsel thou hast yet left in them the pounded garlic from yesterday! May the pestle choke thee and prevent thee from replying!

The flesh of this eel will be

MIMES


savory. It will be eaten by epicurean guests. Aristippus who comes crowned with roses, Hylas whose sandals, even, are tinted with red powders and my master, Parneios, with his buckles of hammered gold. I know they will clap their hands when they taste it, and allow me to remain, leaning against the door, while I watch the supple limbs of the dancing-girls and the cithern-players.

MIME

I

le cuisinier.

MIME II

 WILL cause thee to be scourged, yea scourged with rods. Thy skin will be covered with stains like a nurse's cloak.—Slaves, take her away; first beat her about the belly; then turn her like a pipe-fish and beat her about the back. Listen; do you hear the clacking of her tongue?—Wilt thou be quiet, miserable wretch?

B. And what have I done to be given over to the sycophants?

A. 'Tis a cat that hath stolen naught; that now wishes to digest at her ease and softly drowse.—Slaves, bear away these fish in your baskets.—Why art thou selling lampreys, since the law-givers have forbidden it?

MIMES

B. I did not know it was for- MIMÉ
bidden. II

A. And hath not the public
crier announced it loudly in the
market-place, commanding: "Si-
lence"?

B. I heard not the "silence".

A. Hussy, thou mockest at the
laws of the city.—This woman
even aspires to tyranny. Strip her
that I see if she be not a veritable
Pisistrātus in hiding.—Ah! Ah!
but now thou wert a woman. So
then, so then. Verily, here is a
woman-vender of a new species! Is
it the fish that prefer thee in this
fashion or thy customers?—Leave
this young fellow naked: the heli-
asts shall judge if he be not pun-
ished for selling prohibited fish at
the stalls, disguised as a woman.

MIMES

MIME B. O sycophant, have pity and
II lend ear. I love better than life a
young girl who is guarded by the
slave-merchant of *Longs Murs*.
He will sell her for twelve minæ
and my father refuses me the
pieces of silver. I have prowled
about the house too frequently
and now they have placed her in
durance lest I should see her.
Soon she will be brought to the
market-place with her friends and
master. I have thus disguised
myself that I may speak with her;
and that I may gain her attention,
unobserved, am I selling these
lampreys.

A. If thou givest me one mina
I will cause thy friend to be seized
with thee when she is buying thy
fish and I will feign to denounce

MIMES

both, thou as seller, she as buyer; MIMES
then, confined in my house, you II
may scoff till the next dawn at the
miserly merchant. — Slaves, return
her dress to this woman, for she *is*
a woman (did you not see her?)
and these lampreys are false lam-
preys — by Hermes, they are ex-
ceedingly fat, glistening pipe-fish
(did you not tell me so?) — Return
to thy fish-stall, insolent creature,
and have a care not to sell anything
for I still suspect thee.

— Here comes the young girl;
by Aphrodīte, she is supple; I
shall have one mina, and perhaps,
by intimidating this young man,
may divide the love also.

la fausse marchande.

MIME III



PEN to us! child, child open to us! Behold the offspring of the wooden swallow. Her head is painted red and her wings are blue. Not so are the living swallows, as we know; and, by Philomēla, there is one, even now, which wings its flight across the sky; but ours is carved from wood. Child! open to us, open to us, child!

Here are ten, twenty, thirty of us bringing you the painted swallow to announce the return of spring. No flowers are here as yet, but accept these white and rose-tinted palms.

We know you are cooking a stuffed paunch, with honied beets; and yesterday your slave bought

MIMES

dormice to preserve in sugar. MIME
Guard your feast unto yourself : we III
ask but little. Some fried nuts!
some fried nuts! Child, give us
some nuts, give us some nuts,
child!

The swallow's head is as rosy as
the new dawn and her wings are
blue as the new month's sky.
Rejoice ye! The porches will
shed coolness and the trees will
paint their shadows on the meads.
Our swallow predicts you boun-
tiful harvest of wine and oil.
Turn last year's oil in our jugs and
the wine in our amphoras; for, —
listen, O child! — the swallow says
she wills to taste them! Pour out
your wine and oil for our wooden
swallow!

In former days when you were

MIMES

MIME small you have perchance, like us,
III borne the swallow from door to door. She motions that she remembers it. Do not, then, keep us waiting at your threshold till the night-torches are alight. Give us of your fruits and curds. If you are generous we will go to the next house where dwells the miser with red eyebrows. The swallow will ask him for his dish of rabbit, his yellow tart and his roasted thrushes and we will beseech him to throw us some silver-pieces. He will raise his eyebrows and shake his head. Then we will teach our swallow a song whereat you will laugh. For so, she will pipe abroad through the city the tale of the wife of a miser with red eyebrows. *l'hirondelle de bois.*

MIME IV



OSTELRY, o'er-run
with vermin, the poet,
bitten till deplete of
blood, salutes thee. Not
to thank thee for having sheltered
him one night on the borders of a
dark highway; the route is miry as
that which leads to Hades — but
thy cots are broken down, the lamps
smoky; thine oil is rancid, galettes
mouldy, and, since last autumn there
are white worms in thine emptied
nut-shells. But the poet is grateful
to the venders of swine who came
from Megăra to Athēnæ (thy parti-
tions are thin, O hostelry), and ren-
ders thanks also to thy vermin,
which kept him awake by preying
upon his whole body, swarming in
hurrying masses upon the beds.

MIMES

MIME For, since thus he might not
IV sleep, he sought to breathe the
white moonlight through an opening in the wall; and from thence he saw a vender of women who came knocking at the door very late at night. The merchant called: Child, child!—but the slave was snoring, face downward, and with upstretched arms muffled his ears with the coverings. Then the poet wrapped himself in a yellow robe, of the same shade as nuptial veils: this crocus-tinted robe had been left in his possession one morning when a young love-maiden deserted him clad in a new lover's robe. So the poet, with the outward seeming of a servant, opened the door; and the vender of women ushered in a numerous band. The breasts of

MIMES

the young girl who entered last MIMÉ
were firm as the quince fruit; she IV
was worth, at least, twenty minæ.

— O servant, said she, I am
weary; where is my bed?

— O my dear lady, said the poet,
thy friends already occupy every
bed in the inn; only the servant's
cot is left; if you wish to lie
thereon you are welcome.

The miserable wretch who cared
for all these fair, young girls flared
the light of the great charred lamp-
wick in the face of the poet; per-
ceiving a maid-servant, neither
too beautiful nor well arrayed, he
uttered no word of dissent.


Hostelry, the poet, bitten till
deplete of blood, thanks thee. The
woman who rested with the maid-
servant this night was softer than

MIMES

MIME eider-down and her fragrant throat
IV was like to a perfected fruit. But
all this had remained untold, O
hostelry, but for the noisy prating
of thy cot. The poet fears that the
little pigs of Megăra may have thus
learned of his adventure. O ye
who listen to these words, if the
“*coi, coi*” of these little pigs from
Agora to Athēnæ falsely relates
that our poet indulges in low
amours come to the hostelry and
see his little friend whose love he
knew,—she whose breasts are as
firm as the quince fruit,—this poet
bitten by the blessèd vermin on a
moonlit night.

l'hôtellerie.

M I M E V

 HIS earthen jar overflowing with milk is intended as an offering to the little goddess of my fig-tree. I will pour libations of new milk each morning, and if it so pleaseth the goddess I will fill the jar with honey or unblended wine. Thus will I honor her from spring-tide until autumn; and should a storm break this jar I will purchase another at the potteries, even though clay should be priceless this year.

In return, I pray the little goddess who watches over the fig-tree in my garden to change the color of its figs. They were white, sweet and savory; but Iolé wearies of them.

MIMES

MIME She now longs for red figs, and
v vows they will be better thus.

It is never true to nature that a fig-tree bearing white fruit should put forth red figs in the autumn; nevertheless Iolé wishes it thus. If I have faithfully consecrated myself to my garden gods; if I have woven them garlands of violets and poured forth libations of wine and milk from my water-jars; if I have gathered poppies for them at the hour when the sun kisses the crest of my wall, mid swarms of gnats that float on the evening air; if I am worthy of their friendly consideration for my religious observance of all these rites, O goddess, cause thy fig-tree to blossom for the bearing of red figs.

If thou should'st not hearken to

MIMES

my supplication I shall not cease to MIMÉ
honor thee with cool jars; but I V
shall be constrained to rise at dawn,
in the fruit season, to dextrously
pry open each new fig and stain its
inner recesses with fine Tyrian dyes
of purple.

les figues peintes.

MIME VI



A potter, having turned the base of a jar whose bowl I moulded and curved from yellow clay, have filled it with fruit as an offering to the god of gardens. But he ever contemplates the shimmering foliage, fearing lest thieves break through the walls. At night the furtive dormice have burrowed among the apples and devoured them to the very seeds. Timidly, as the fourth hour approached, they emerged, waving their downy black and white tails. At dawn Aphrodīte's doves perched on the violet rim of my earthen vessel, erecting their little, iridescent neck-feathers. At quivering noontide, a young girl, alone, drew near the

MIMES

god, bringing hyacinth wreaths. MIMÉ
Having perceived me where I VI
tarried, crouching in the shadow of
a beech, unregarding of me, she
crowned the jar, devoid of its fruits.
Though the god, thus despoiled
of his flowers, become enangered,
though the dormice devour my
apples, though Aphrodīte's birds
curve their tender heads towards
one another wonderingly! — yet
have I twined the fresh hyacinths
in my hair, and till the next noon I
will await her who garlands the
jars.

la jarre couronnée.

MIME VII



MANNIA, come chastise this insolent one with a good, leather lash of Paphlagonia. I bought him of the Phœnician merchants for ten minæ and he has not suffered with hunger under my roof. Let him tell it, if the cooks have given him rancid fish or olives. He has gorged himself with stuffed and roasted paunches, pipe-fish from lake Copais, and rich curds that still bear the impress of their wicker moulds. He has drunk of the unblended wines that I treasured in fragrant goat-skin bottles. He has emptied my flasks of Syrian balm and his tunic is violet-purple: the scullions have never plunged him in the vats.

MIMES

His locks gleam like the aigrettes of a gold torch; the barber has never touched scissors to them. Each day my women depilate him and the lamp's red tongue licks his skin. His loins are whiter than my throat or than the flanks of ivory lions sculptured on knife-handles. MIME
VII


By my soul, he has drunk as much wine in my caves, in one evening, as the initiates of the Thesmophoria during the three days of mysteries. I thought him snoring, prone on the ground near the kitchens, and I would have prayed the torturers to flay his lips with a mortar-pestle for punishment; he should have expiated his drunkenness with the acrid flavor of freshly bruised garlic. But I found him trembling,

MIMES

MIME with uneasy glance, holding in his
VII hand my mirror of polished silver ;
and this thrice impious one, having
stolen from my jewel-casket one of
my golden cicadas, had fastened it in
his curled locks. Then, balancing
on one leg, his body vacillating with
the fumes of wine, he was twining
about his thighs the gauze covering
in which I am accustomed to clothe
myself beneath my tunic when,
with my friends, I go to look on at
the fêtes of Adōnis.

l'esclave déguisé.

MIME VIII

 HIS lamp with its new wick burneth with pure, refined oil, before the evening star. The threshold is strewn with roses that the children have not removed. The dancers wave their last torches that stretch their fiery fingers out into the night-shades. The little piper has again breathed three shrill notes on his bone flute. The carriers are come, bringing coffers filled with translucid circlets for the ankles. Here is one who has coated his face with soot and intoned the jests of his deme. Two red-veiled women smile in the quiet air, as they anoint their hands with cinaber.

MIMES

MIME The evening star ariseth and the
VIII heavy-laden blossoms close. Near
the great wine vat, covered with a
sculptured slab, is seated a laughing
child whose shining feet are shod
with gold sandals. He waves a
pine torch and its red strands flare
across the darkness. His lips are
half opened like a cleft fruit. He
sneezes, turning toward the left,
and the metal reverberates under
his feet. Whereat I know he will
depart at a bound.

Io! behold the yellow veil of the
virgin bride draweth near! Her
women sustain her 'neath each
arm. Remove the torches! The
nuptial bed awaits her, and I will
guide her toward the soft glim-
mering of its purple tissues. Io!
Plunge the lampwick in the fra-

MIMES

grant oil. It flickers and dies. MIMÉ
Extinguish the torches! O my VIII
bride, I raise thee to my breast;
that thy feet may not crush the
roses on the threshold.

la veillée nuptiale.

MIME IX



PRAY whoever shall read these lines to make renewed search for my cruel slave. He fled from my chamber at the second hour after midnight.

I had bought him in a Bythynian city and he was redolent with the balm of his native land. Long were his locks and sweet his lips. We took passage upon a vessel slender as a bean-shell. The bearded sailors forbade us to shave or cut the hair, fearing storms; and they threw overboard a spotted cat by the light of the new moon. The little wooden oars and canvas sails which impel these barks bore us by way of the Pontiac sea, where the waves are leaden-hued, to the banks of Thrace

MIMES

where the foam-caps are purple MIMÉ
touched with saffron when the IX
sun rises. Then we crossed the
Cyclādes and reached the isle of
Rhōdus. Near there we disembarked from the tapered hull at another isle the name of which I will never reveal. For there the grottoes are hung with red grasses and sown with green furze, the meadows soft as milk, and all the berries of the shrubs, be they dark red, clear as drops of crystal, or black as swallows' heads, contain a delicious juice that reanimates the soul. I will remain as silent about this isle as is an initiate of mysteries. It is very fair and no shadows ever hover over it. There loved I all one summer. In the autumn a flat-boat bore us to these

MIMES

MIME shores. For my affairs were being
IX neglected; and I wished to raise
money to clothe my slave in tunics
of fine byssus. I have given him
golden bracelets, staves wrought
from electron and precious stones
that gleam in the dark.

O miserable one that I am! He
rose from beside me and I know
not whence to seek him. O ye
women who each year mourn
Adōnis, be not contemptuous of
my supplications! If this wicked
one should come within your reach,
bind him with iron chains; fetter
his limbs; throw him in the dun-
geon paved with flags; have him
driven to the gibbet and may the
State-Torturer bend his head under
the irons; sow generous handfuls
of seeds around the gallows-hill,

MIMES

that the kites and crows come the sooner to feed upon his flesh. But rather (since I trust ye not and am not sure that ye might not bestow pity upon a skin so polished with pumice-stone), I prefer you should not touch him, even with the tips of your delicate fingers. Give him over to your young heralds; that they return him to me instantly; I shall know in what manner to punish him myself: I will chastise him cruelly. By the offended gods, but I love him, I love him.

MIME

IX

l'amoureuse.

MIME X



IF you doubt that I have wielded the heavy oars look at my hands and knees; you will find them worn like ancient tools. I know each plant of that marine desert which is violet-hued at times, at others blue, and I also know the principle of each spiral shell. Some of the plants are endowed with human life; these have transparent eyes like jelly, a body like the sow's teats and a multitude of tiny tentacles which are also mouths. Among the perforated shells I have seen some which were pierced more than a thousand times; and through each tiny opening came and went a fleshly

MIMES

foot, by means of which the shell MIMES
was conveyed about. X

After passing Hercules' pillars the ocean that surrounds the world becomes strange and infuriate.

And in its course it creates darksome islands whereon dwell different types of men and wonderful animals. There is a great serpent, with golden beard, which governs its kingdom wisely; and some women of this country have an eye at the extremity of each finger. Others have beaks and crests like birds; otherwise they resemble us. On one isle at which I landed, the inhabitants carried their heads where our stomachs are located; and when they saluted us they bowed their abdomens. As to cyclops, pigmies and giants I

MIMES

MIME will say naught of them; for their
x number is too great.

None of these things appeared to partake of the unnatural to me; I felt no terror of them. But one evening we reached Scyllæum. Our bark touched sand on the Sicilian side. As I was turning the rudder I perceived in the water's midst the head of a woman with closed eyes. Her hair was tinged with gold. She seemed to sleep. And then, indeed, I trembled for I feared to look into her eyes, well knowing that, having once gazed therein, I should turn the rudder of our boat toward the seething whirlpool.

le marin.

MIME XI



N the fertile pasture-lands of Sicilĭa, there is a wood of sweet almonds not far from the sea.

Therein is an ancient bench of black stone, whereon of old the herdsmen have been wont to sit.

On the branches of adjacent trees hang cicada cages woven of fine rushes, and baskets of green osiers that are used to gather in the fish. She who sleeps upright on the stone bench, her feet banded about with fillets, her head hidden under a pointed, red, straw hat, awaits a shepherd who has ne'er returned. He departed, his hands coated with pure wax, to cut reeds in the damp thickets; he desired to fashion from

MIMES

MIME them a flute of seven pipes, as the
XI god Pan had taught him to do.
And when seven hours were passed,
the first note quavered forth near
the black stone bench where she
who sleeps to-day was watching.
Now this note was near, clear and
silvery. Then seven more hours
passed over the sun-blued prairie,
and a second note resounded,
joyous and golden. And every
seventh hour she that is sleeping
now heard one of the notes of the
new syrinx ring out. The third
note was distant and harsh like the
clang of iron. The fourth was still
more distant, and deeply resonant,
like the voice of bronze. The fifth
was broken and staccato, like the
tone of a tin vessel. But the sixth
was dull and muffled, as unvibrant

MIMES

as the leaden weights of a net that MIME
clash together. XI

Now she who sleeps to-day awaits
the seventh note which soundeth
never. The days enwrap the
almond woods with their white
mists, the twilights with their gray
mists, and the nights with their
mists of purple and blue. Per-
haps the shepherd is awaiting the
seventh note on the shore of a
luminous sea, in the thickening
shadow of nights and years; and,
seated on the black stone bench,
she who awaits the herdsman has
sunk to slumber.

les six notes de la flûte.

MIME XII



HE tyrant Polycrātes commanded that there should be brought him three sealed flagons containing three different choice wines. The faithful slave selected one black stone flagon, one of yellow gold and one of limpid glass; but the thoughtless cup-bearer poured the same wine of Samos into all three flagons.

Polycrātes examined the flagon of black stone and frowned. He broke the gypsum seal and inhaled the wine. This flagon, said he, is of common material and the odor of the wine within it pleases me but indifferently.

He raised the flagon of yellow gold and admired it: "this wine,"


MIMES

said he, having unsealed it, "is certainly inferior to its beautiful receptacle enriched with vermillion grapes and effulgent vines." MIME XII

But grasping the third flagon of limpid glass he held it up to the sunlight. The ruby wine glowed scintillant. Polycrātes removed the seal, poured the contents of the flagon in his beaker and quaffed it at a single draught. "This," said he, drawing a long breath, "is the best wine I have tasted." Then, placing his goblet on the table, he hurled the flagon that it shivered into fragments.

le vin de Samos.

MIME XIII

HE fig-trees have shed their figs and the olive-trees their olives; for a strange thing has come to pass in the isle of Scyros. A young girl was fleeing, pursued by a youth. She had lifted the skirt of her tunic till the edge of the gauze under-garment was seen. As she ran she let fall a small silver mirror. The young man raised it from the ground and gazed therein; he admiringly contemplated his eyes, fraught with wisdom, loved their intelligence, ceased his pursuit and seated himself on the sand. And the young girl fled anew, followed by a man in the meridian of his days. She had

MIMES

upraised the bottom of her tunic and her limbs were like the meat of a fruit. In her flight an apple of gold rolled from her lap. Then he who followed her plucked the gold apple from the earth, concealed it under his tunic, gloated over it, ceased his pursuit and seated himself on the sand. And the young girl still fled; but her steps were less swift. For she was followed by a tottering old man. She had lowered her tunic and her ankles were enfolded in cloth of many colors. But whilst she was running the strange thing came to pass: for, one by one, her breasts were detached and rolled to the ground, like ripened medlars. The old man swallowed both; and the young girl, before flinging herself into the

MIME

XIII

MIMES

MIME river that crosses the isle of Scyros,
XIII uttered two shrieks of horror and
regret.

les trois courses.

MIME XIV



EXTENDED thus by my rounded rods, plaited from clay straws, or woven from earth-mould that the firing has reddened, I am held backwards and toward the sun by a young girl with beautiful breasts. With her other hand she raises her white, woolen tunic and above her Persian sandals may be seen such ankles as are moulded for the wearing of electron rings. Her hair is waved and a large pin is thrust through it at the neck. She evinces her dread of the sun by averting her head and in seeming is as Aphrodite come with bended neck.

Such is my fair mistress, and

MIMES

MIME formerly we wandered in the mead-
XIV ows sown with hyacinths, when
she was in the rosy flesh and I of
yellow straw: the white sunlight
kissed me without, and beneath
my dome the perfume of the maid-
en's locks caressed me. And the
deity who transforms objects hav-
ing hearkened to my prayer, like a
water-swallow that descends with
outstretched wings to caress with
its beak a flower born in the depths
of a pool, I gently alighted on her
head; I lost the reed which held
me aloof from her in the air and
became the hat which covered her
with its fluttering roof.


But a potter that also modelled
figures of young girls, having spied
us in a suburb of the city, implored
us to wait while he rapidly turned

MIMES

under his thumbs a tiny image of MIMÉ
clay. A worker in small figures, he XIV
reproduced us in his clay language
and assuredly he understood how
to delicately plait me, deftly fold
the white, woolen tunic, and wave
my lady's hair; but not compre-
hending the unexpressed desire of
things inanimate he cruelly sepa-
rated me from the head I loved; so,
once more become a parasol in my
renewed existence, I now balance
myself afar from the neck of my
mistress.

l'ombrelle de Tanagra.

MIME XV

 CONSECRATE this altar to the memory of Kinné. Here, near the black rocks where the foam splinters, we have roamed together. The channelled strand knows it, and the woods of service-trees,—the reeds of the sands and the yellow tops of the sea-poppies. Her hands were filled with fluted conch-shells and I poured kisses in her quivering, shell-like ears. She laughed at the crested birds that perch on the sea-weed with balancing tails. I saw in her eyes the long line of white light that marks the horizon boundary of the brown earth and the blue sea. The water rose about her feet to the ankles

MIMES

and the tiny sea denizens leaped upon her woolen tunic. MIME
XV

We loved the shining evening star and the hazy crescent moon. The wind that crosses the ocean bore to us the fragrance of spice-lands. Our lips were whitened with the sea-salt and we watched the soft, translucent creatures on the waves, like living lamps. The breath of Aphrodite enveloped us.

I know not why the Kind Goddess had lulled Kinné to that long sleep. She sank among the yellow sand-poppies at the rose-dawn of the morning star. Blood oozed from her mouth and the light of her eyes went out. Between her eyelids I saw the long, black line that marks the dividing of those that rejoice in the sunlight from those that weep


MIMES

MIME near the fens. Now Kinné walks
xv alone on the shores of the nether
waters and the hollows of her ears
are resonant with the murmurings
of the flying shades. Over the
sea-rim of hell wave sad black-
headed poppies, and the star of
Persephōne's dim sky has neither
evening nor morning, but is like
to a withered asphodel.

Kinné.

SISMÉ

(Not included in original edition.)

HE whom here you see
in withered form was
called Sismé, daughter
of Thratta; in her youth
she knew but the bees and the
flocks; then she tasted the salt of
the sea; at length a merchant led
her into the white houses of Syrïa.
Now she is closely swathed, like a
precious statuette, in her stone
sheath. Count the rings which
gleam on her fingers: just so many
years had she. See the fillet that
bands her forehead: thereon she
timidly received her first love-kiss.
Touch the star of pale rubies that
sleeps where once was her bosom:
there reposed a belovèd head.

M I M E S

SISMÉ Near Sismé they have placed her tarnished mirror, her silver osselets and long amber pins which once adorned her hair; for, at her twentieth year (there are twenty rings), she was covered with gems.

A rich magistrate gave her all that women covet: Sismé never forgets him, and her little, white bones have not rejected the jewels.

Now the magistrate has built this ornate sepulchre for her, to protect the tender dead, and surrounded her with vases of unguents and golden lachrimatories. Sismé thanks him.

But thou, if thou would'st know the secret of an embalmed heart, unclasp the tiny joints of this left hand: there thou wilt find a simple, little, glass ring. This ring was

M I M E S

transparent; from the passing of SISMÉ
the years it has become smoky and
opaque; Sismé loves it. Be silent
and comprehend.

Sismé.

MIME XVI



L A I D in Lysander's tomb a green osier, a red lamp and a silver goblet.

The green osier will serve to recall to him, for a little space (for one season will turn it to dust), our friendship, the soft verdure of the pastures, the arched backs of the grazing sheep and the cool, shaded nooks where we fell asleep. And he will remember our earthly sustenance and the winters when fruits are garnered within the amphoras.

The red lamp is wrought with naked women who clasp hands and dance with interweaving limbs. The perfume of the oil will evaporate, and the clay from which the

MIMES

lamp is fashioned will crumble in MIMÉ
the passing of the years. So Ly- XVI
sander shall not forget the happy
nights and white bodies which the
lamp illumined; and it also served
to shear, with its red tongue of
flame, the soft down of arm and
thigh, for the enhancing of touch
and sight.

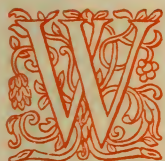
The silver goblet is wreathed
about with vines and golden grapes;
an incensed god waves his ivied
staff, and the nostrils of Silenus'
ass seem still to quiver as in life.
It was filled with sharp wine, pure
and blended; wine of Chios per-
fumed by the goat-skin, and wine
of Aegina cooled in earthen jars
hung to the wind. Lysander
drank from it at the fêtes where he
recited poems; and the soul of the

M I M E S

MIME wine it was that dowered him with
xvi the spirit of poesy and oblivion of
earthly matters. Thus the form
of his spirit will still bide near
him and, when the osier shall have
decayed and the lamp be crumbled,
the silver vessel will still endure in
his sepulchre. Oft may he drain
this goblet, filled with oblivion, in
memory of his happiest moments
amongst us.

les présents funéraires.

MIME XVII



WETHER the dead be enclosed in sculptured stone sarcophagi, or sealed in the hollow of metal or clay urns, or encased upright, gilded and decorated in blue, with brain and viscera removed, swathed in linen bands, yet will I conduct them in a company and guide them on their way with my controlling wand.

We advance down a swift path that eye of man hath not seen. Harlots press close against virgins, murderers against philosophers, mothers against those that refused to bear children, and priests against perjurers. For they repent them of their sins, were they those of

M I M E S

MIME the imagination or of the deed.

XVII And having never been free upon earth, since they were there trammelled by customs and laws, or their own beliefs, they fear isolation and cling to each other for help. She that slept naked in the tiled chambers among the men is consoling a young girl who died before her nuptial eve,—yet dreaming imperiously of her love. One that was wont to murder on the highways, his face grimed with ashes and soot, places his hand on the brow of a thinker who wished to regenerate the world and preached death. The woman who loved her children and suffered through them buries her face in the bosom of an hetaira who, by intent, was without issue. The long-robed man that

MIMES

was persuaded he believed in his MIMÉ
God and constrained himself to XVII
kneel often, now weeps on the
shoulder of a cynic who broke
every law of the flesh and spirit
before the eyes of the world. So
sustains the one the other along
the route, journeying under the
yoke of memory.

Then they come to the bank of
Lēthe where I range them along
the shore of the silent-flowing water.
Some plunge therein their heads
containing evil thoughts, others the
hands that wrought evil. Rising
therefrom, the water of Lēthe has
effaced all remembrance.

Therewith they stand aloof from
one another, and each smiles believ-
ing he is free.

Hermes psychagôgos.

MIME XVIII



THUS spake the Mirror:
I was wrought from silver by a skilled workman. At first I was concave like his hand and my reverse side was like a lustreless eye-ball. But I was then incurved in such manner as to reflect images. At length Athēna breathed wisdom within me. I am not unaware of the young maiden's desires as she holds me, and I respond in advance that she is fair. Yet she rises at night and lights her bronze lamp. She turns on me the yellowed lamp-flame and her heart calls for another countenance than her own. I reflect her own white brow, her finely moulded cheeks,

MIMES

her nascent, swelling breasts, and MIME
young eyes fraught with ques- XVIII
tioning.

Her trembling lips she nearly
poses on my surface; but the burn-
ing gold illumines naught save her
countenance and all else within me
is obscure.

Thus spake the golden Dart:—

As I was ingloriously plying
through a weft of byssus, having
been stolen from a Tyrian by a
black slave, I was seized upon by
a perfumed courtesan. She thrust
me in her hair and I pricked the
fingers of the imprudent. Aphro-
dīte taught me and sharpened my tip
with voluptuousness. At length,
I have come to be worn in the coif-
fure of this young girl, and have
caused her silken twists to vibrate

MIMES

MIME to my sway. Her blood riots under
XVIII my touch like a wild heifer but
she divines not the cause of her
suffering. During the four watches
of the night I evoke sentiments in
her mind to which her heart
responds. The flickering lamp-
flame casts dancing shadows which
curve their wingèd arms. Thus,
in thronging mass, appear hurry-
ing visions and she swiftly ques-
tions her mirror. It but reflects
a countenance tortured with desire.

Thus spake the Poppy-head:—

I am born in underground fields
among those plants whose hues are
nameless. I know every shade of
darkness; I have seen the irradi-
ate flowers of night. Proserpina
has borne me on her bosom and
there I partook of sleep. When

MIMES

Aphrodīte's dart wounds the young MIMÉ
girl to eager desire I show her the XVIII
shapes which wander in eternal
night. There are beautiful young
mortals graced with charms which
have ceased to exist. Aphrodīte
endows with desire and Athēna
reveals to mankind the unavail of
their dreams; but Proserpīna holds
the secret keys of the two gates of
horn and of ivory. By the first por-
tal she sends forth into the night
the phantoms that haunt mortals;
and Aphrodīte makes captives of
them, while Athēna destroys them.
But through the second portal the
Kind Goddess receives all those
that are awearied of Aphrodīte and
Athēna.

le miroir, l'aiguille, le pavot.

MIME XIX



CMÉ died while yet I was pressing my lips upon her hands, and the mourning women came about us. The cold crept over her lower limbs till they became pale and chilled. Then it mounted to her heart, that ceased to flutter, like a blood-stained bird one finds outstretched with feet drawn up on an icy morn. And so ascended the chill to her lips which became as sombred purple.

Then the mourning women anointed her body with balm of Syrĩa and composed her hands and feet to lay her on the funeral pile. And the red flames leaped upon her like an ardent lover in the mid-

MIMES

summer nights, to devour her with
their scorching kisses. MIMÉ
XIX

And the sepulchral men, whose
office it is to do this, brought to my
house two silver vases wherein are
the ashes of Acmé.

Thrice Adōnis died and thrice
the women lamented on the house-
tops. And in this third year on
the night of the festival, I dreamed
a dream.

Meseemèd that my dear Acmé
was standing by my bedside, her
left hand clasping her bosom. She
came forth from the realm of spirits ;
for her body was strangely trans-
parent, save about her heart whereon
she was pressing her hand.

Then grief aroused me and I
lamented as did the women who
were weeping for Adōnis.

MIMES

MIME But the bitter poppies of sleep
XIX again encompassed me. And again
 it seemed to me that my beloved
 Acmé was standing by my bed, her
 hand pressed to her heart.

 Once more I lamented and prayed
 the cruel guardian of dreams to
 withhold her vision.

 But the third time she reappeared
 and signed with her head.

 I know not by what obscure path
 she led me to the meadows of the
 dead, which are surrounded by the
 watery girdle of the Styx where
 croak the black frogs. And there,
 seated on a knoll, she withdrew the
 left hand which covered her bosom.

 Now the shade of Acmé was
 transparent as beryl, but I saw
 within her breast, a red heart-
 shaped stain.

MIMES

And she supplicated me, with MIMES
wordless speech, to take back her XIX
bleeding heart that thereby she
might wander sorrowless midst the
poppy-fields which wave there
below like wheat in the fields of
Sicilia.

Then I clasped her in my arms
but felt only the subtle ether. Yet
it seemed to me that blood flowed
into my heart and the shade of
Acme was dissipated into thin air.

And therefore have I written
these lines because my heart is
permeated with the heart of Acme.

Acme.

MIME XX



HE little guardian of Proserpina's temple has laid honey-combs sprinkled with poppy-seeds, in the corbeils. She has long since been aware that the goddess never tastes them, for she has watched from behind the pilasters. The Kind Goddess remains impassive and is nourished under the earth. But even if she were nurtured with our sustenance she would prefer bread rubbed with garlic and sharp wine; for the bees of Hades make honey which is perfumed with myrrh and those that walk in the violet meadows of the lower regions ceaselessly wave black poppies. So the bread of spirits is preserved in honey which savours

MIMES

of embalming and the seeds which MIME
are scattered there beget a longing XX
for sleep. Therefore hath Homer
said that the dead, ordained by the
sword of Odysseus, came in a band
to drink the black blood of lambs
from a square trench hollowed out
of the earth. But for this once only
the dead imbibed of blood, essaying
to renew life, for they are wont to
partake of funereal honey and som-
bre poppies, and the liquid which
flows in their veins is the water of
Lēthe. Spirits devour sleep and
quaff oblivion.

For this reason, and none other,
mankind has chosen such gifts as
offerings to Proserpina; but she is
not disquieted thereby, for she is
imbued with oblivion and perme-
ated with sleep.

MIMES

MIME The little guardian of Proser-
xx pīna's temple awaiteth a lonely
shade which will come perhaps
to-morrow, perhaps never. If spir-
its retain a loving heart like that of
the young earth-maidens, this shade
has not attained forgetfulness
through the stagnant waters of
oblivion's stream, nor can it rest
by means of the sad poppies from
the field of sleep.

But, doubtless, she desires for-
getfulness with all the desire of
mortal hearts. So she will come
some evening when the red moon is
mounting the starry dome, and will
remain near Proserpīna's corbeils.
She will break the honey-comb
sprinkled of poppy-seeds with the
little guardian of the temple and,
in the hollow of her palm, will

MIMES

bring some of the stagnant water MIMÉ
of Lēthe. The shade will partake XX
of the earth-poppies and the young
girl will slake her thirst with the
water of the lower regions; then, on
the other's brow, each will imprint
a kiss and the shade will fare hap-
pily among spirits while the maiden
will rejoice among mortals.

l'ombre attendue.

EPILOGUE

THE long, long night during which Daphnis and Chloe remained unslumbering, like unto owls, brought them at last to where abode Proserpina, the luminous one. The indulgent god of lovers granted them early death such as fares to pious children. He feared the jealousy of the nymphs, or the god Pan, or Zeus; so he gave wing to their souls while dawn yet slept; and they came to the kingdom of Hades where, ever spotless, they traversed undefiled the infernal bog, listened to the frogs, and fled before the triple-throated bayings of the red-jawed Cerberus. Then, in the sombre meadows which are dimly illumined by a starry twilight,

EPILOGUE

the two white spirits sat down and gathered the yellow crocuses and hyacinths; and Daphnis wove for Chloe a wreath of asphodels, but they ate not of the blue lotus that grows on the banks of Lēthe nor drank of the water which causes loss of memory, for Chloe had no wish to forget. And queen Proserpina gave them sandals of ice with soles of fire to cross the molten torrent of lurid waves.

Yet, despite the large yellow, blue, and wan white flowers of these subterranean meadows Chloe became awearied. Among the tenebrous grasses she saw only night-moths whose black wings were etched with sanguinary stripes. Daphnis found but creatures of the night to caress, whose skin

EPILOGUE

was soft as the fur of bats. Chloe feared the brown owls that hooted in the sacred woods. Daphnis regretted the whiteness of sunlit creations. They both remembered not having wet their chins on the banks of Lēthe; they mourned for life and invoked the boundless beneficence of Proserpina.

And as all dreams issue forth from Erēbus, by the ivory portal, the sleep of spirits is dreamless. Since it is their wont to be wrapped in oblivion, no dreams, save those of the undefined plains that surround Tartārus, can evolve in their void, impressionless minds; but Daphnis and Chloe suffered immeasurably because the memories of their past life were never reproduced in their sleeping visions.

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So the Kind Goddess took pity upon them and permitted the Guardian of Souls to console them.

On a blue night he feigned to confound them with his dreams; and, amongst the multicolored beings, crowding and flying about, shouting, laughing or weeping, which pass beneath our eyelids, when they have escaped the dim portal of Erëbus, Daphnis and Chloe, clinging closely to each other, returned to view the Lesbian isle.

The gloom was azure-tinted, the trees bright, the underwood luminous. The moon seemed a golden mirror. Chloe was reflected therein with a necklace of stars. Mitylēne rose afar like a city of pearl. Silver-white canals intersected the meadow. Some marble statues,

EPILOGUE

overtaken, drank of the dew. Their knots of hair, yellow-tinted, might be seen sparkling in the grass. The air palpitated with vague light.

—Alas, said Chloe, where is the day? Is the sun dead? Where can we go, my Daphnis? I no longer know the way. Ah! our flocks are no more, Daphnis: they have strayed away since we departed.

And Daphnis replied:

—O Chloe, we return to wander aimlessly like the dreams that visited our eyelids whilst we slept in the meadows or reposed in the stables. Our heads are empty as ripened poppies. Our hands are laden with the flowers of eternal night. Thy dear brow is banded with asphodels and thou wearest on thy bosom the crocus that blooms

EPILOGUE

in the Isles of the Blest. Perhaps it were better not to remember.

X —But behold what I recall, my Daphnis, said Chloe. The path leading to the grotto of the nymphs borders this meadow. I recognize the flat stone whereon we sat. Seest thou not yon woods whence came the wolf that so affrighted us? Here, thou didst weave for me, for the first time, a cicada cage. There, in that thicket, thou madest captive for me one of the shrilling cicadas and placed it in my hair where it sang without ceasing. It was more beautiful than the golden ones of the Athēnians of yore; for it was alive and sang. I would that once again I might have one.

And Daphnis replied:

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—The cicada is silent at noon-hour when the wind pierces reddened spaces in the heart of the stubble, and the green-pointed hemlocks spread their white umbels for coolness. Now they are asleep and I know not where to find one.

—But look, Chloe, here is the cavern of the god Pan: and I see the pool where the sight of thy naked body so disquieted me; and near there the wooded copse where thy first kiss filled me with a delirium of rapture, —there where I came to watch thee whilst I lured the bird snares in the winter, and, in the centre of the vast hall, saw thee arranging the fruits in the great amphoras.

—O Chloe, the house stands there no longer, and the wood

EPILOGUE

of service-trees is desolate, for the hoopoes and the wrens come there no more and Proserpina has extinguished our ardent souls.

— Look, said Chloe. In a purple flower I have just imprisoned a sleeping bee. I have observed it: 'tis brown and ugly and I like not the black circles on its body. Formerly I believed the bee a wingèd kiss. I have dipped my finger in a honeycomb and all the aroma of new honey has flown. I no longer care for it.

— Chloe, kiss me, said Daphnis.

— Yes, my Daphnis.

And the two white spirits were filled with unrest, but dared not speak. For the kiss no longer thrilled them and the perfume of wild flowers was gone from it; and

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as the desire for sheep, goats, birds
and insects lessened in their hearts,
so, too, the touch of their lips now
failed to create more than a tremor
of emotion.

— O Chloe, here we ate rich
curds on the green osiers.

— And I scarcely care for them
now, my Daphnis.

— O Chloe, there we gathered
the first violets of our last year.

— And I no longer love even
the violets, my Daphnis.

— O Chloe, see this little grove
where thou gavest me thy first kiss.

But Chloe, turning away her
head, answered never a word.

Then, silently, in their hearts
they cursèd the night which seemed
to have tinged everything with
bitterness. And with unuttered

EPILOGUE

words they prayed to the Guardian of Souls to again place them among the ephemeral visions and bear them back through the dim portal of Erëbus into the asphodel meads where they possessed the balmy pain of remembrance.

But the Kind Goddess would not hearken to their prayers.

They remained, apart, bowed down among the fallen statues.

When the blue night grew faintly gilded in the Orient, they heard the sound of oars along the shore. Raising their heads they thought to see the pirate seamen who ravished all the shores of Lesbos, they who call with resonant voice, at each dip of the oars : "*roup-pa-päi*."

Yet, though the mists were thin, they saw no boat. But there was

EPILOGUE

a vast echoing which shivered the foam on the strand :

— The great god Pan is dead !
The great Pan is dead ! The great
Pan is dead !

Then the pearly city of Mityl ne fell down and all the statues were overthrown, the tiny souls of the brooks escaped, and the lesser deities took flight from the hearts of the trees, the pith of the plants, and the vitalized calices of the flowers ; and silence brooded over the white marble fragments.

The shades of Daphnis and Chloe, turned very old in the new light of day, suddenly vanished, and the Kind Goddess, whose power over the subterranean realms was annulled, bore them with her, as she fled over the meadows to the

EPILOGUE

unknown regions where the gods have withdrawn. With her breath she caused Lesbos to bloom anew and returned Daphnis and Chloe to earth once more; for the isle, midst the white canals that intersect it, is covered with their multiplied souls, so many laurels and verdant osier-beds have sprung from its buried heart.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

There have been three editions of MIMES, as follows :


1. MIMES, *première édition, avec une couverture illustrée de Jean Véber* (épuisé).

2. MIMES, *reproduction autographique du manuscrit* (épuisé).

3. MIMES *avec un prologue et un épilogue*. Paris. *Édition du "Mercure de France,"* 1894. Square Fcap 8vo. Pp. viii-84. Grey wrapper.

It is the final edition from which this authorized translation has been made, — and from the author's presentation copy to William Morris. Herein is the only additional *Mime* ever penned by M. Schwob, which, though written last, is placed in the midst of the series in accordance with the author's wish.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

 *AYER-ANDRÉ-MARCEL SCHWOB*, born in the small country town of Chaville (Seine-et-Oise), Aug. 23rd, 1867, is a Jew, descended from an old Jewish stock of priests. Both his grandfathers were rabbis in the synagogue. On his father's side the family was early established in Alsatia. His great-great-grandfather, on his mother's side, (her name being Kaïm,) was also a rabbi who lived as an hermit in the forests near Wissenbourg, and tradition endows him with prophetic powers. The ecclesiastical genealogy of the Kaïm family, which was kept in the synagogue of the town where the family dwelt, is said to trace them back to the Scribe Ezra; however that may be, a faithful servitor of *Sénéchal de Joinville*, by the

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name of Cäym, is mentioned in the memoirs of Joinville, A. D. 1270, and this Cäym, since he dwelt in Champagne, is undoubtedly one of Marcel Schwob's forefathers, and once saved *de Joinville's* life.

M. Schwob's uncle, on his mother's side, altered the name of Kaïm to Cahun and, under that name, is well known as the author of many clever books (*Les Aventures du Capitaine Wagon, La Mer, L'introduction à L'histoire de L'Asia Centrale*), and as a contributor to the *Journal des Débats*.

His father, who was educated at the Lycée de Rouen, with Gustave Flaubert, came to Paris in the early forties and belonged to the literary circle which included de Banville and Gautier; he contributed to the *Corsaire-Satan*, with which Baudelaire was also connected; Jules Verne was also one of their number. Being poor, he was obliged to renounce literature for more

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resourceful means of living and, having married her who afterwards became the mother of Marcel Schwob, in 1857, he was then made Master of the Mint at Strasbourg, but, being unsuccessful there, went to Egypt, where he lived ten years as Director of the Cabinet of Chédif-Pasha, who was Secretary of foreign affairs to the Khédive.

In 1867, at the end of the summer following Marcel Schwob's birth, the family settled in a country house at Tours, and here his youthful days were passed in companionship with a brother and sister both older than himself; but in 1875, his father, wearying of an inactive life devoted to the scanty interests of the municipal council of Tours (to which he belonged), purchased the large provincial journal at Nantes called the *Phare de la Loire* and therein our author exhibited his first timid literary attempts.

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From 1848 till after the war of 1870 both Michelet and Victor Hugo, as well as other writers equally talented, contributed to this sheet, which proves it to have been an important publication.

In 1881, having attended the Lycée at Nantes till he had finished the third form, Marcel Schwob was sent to the Lycée *Louis-le-Grand* in Paris, with the hope that he would enter the *École Normale*, but his expectations were frustrated, his second form there proving but an unfortunate year, though in the preceding one he took his first university degree, marked *very good*. After this came the season of wild oats and he went up for the second part, only to be rejected over and over again, till his father at last decided he should volunteer for the army before his time. In 1885, therefore, he was sent to a most strict artillery regiment, the 35th of Vannes (Britanny).

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During his stay here his recklessness continued unabated but in the winter of 1886 he returned as a boarder at *Sainte-Barbe* in Paris, while still attending the lectures at the Lycée *Louis-le-Grand*, in preparation for the Normal school. Thus he passed three years, respected by both masters and school-mates, being virtually looked upon as an officer among these latter owing to his military schooling; permitted to follow his own wishes almost entirely, he plunged into an ocean of reading, with a consequent neglect of his studies which resulted in his being rejected for the Normal, July, 1888. Wherefore he immediately entered for a licentiate's degree of letters at the *Sorbonne*, one which is supposed to be taken by the Normalites after their first year. In three months' time (November, 1888), he was adjudged first among the list of fourteen successful licentiates,—with over a hundred

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

candidates for the degree,—thus outstripping the Normal scholars who were one year ahead of him in their studies. After this he studied Greek palaeography at the *École des Hautes Études* and pathology under M. Michel Breal.

Being particularly interested in the *argot* of the lower classes he printed a paper on this subject and was then gradually drawn to the study of that thieves' jargon used by François Villon and his companions; at Dijon he discovered various curious documents relating to the *Bande des Coquillarte* to which the poet belonged. Since then he has made a study of Villon, working at the Record office under M. Longnon and contributing several discoveries towards this gentleman's Villon edition of 1892.

This same year the *Revue des Deux Mondes* published an important article written by him about Villon, and from then

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until the present time he has continued his discoveries in this line, unearthing new facts which are duly communicated to the Academy of *Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*; the latest and most important discovery being that of the date of the reprieve of the poet, when Parliament commuted the hanging sentence to banishment for ten years.¹

¹ These facts are briefly stated, with due acknowledgment, in Gaston Paris' recent publication on François Villon, and in the copy presented by the author to M. Schwob he has written the following clever adaptation from Marot's inscription of his Villon edition of 1533:

TO MONSIEUR MARCEL SCHWOB.

Si en Villon on treuve encore a dire,
S'il n'est pourtant ainsi qu'ay pretendu,
A moy tout seul le blasme en soit, messire,
Qui plus y ay travaillé qu'entendu.
Et s'il est mieulx en son ordre estendu
Que paravant en ce mien petit livre,
Le gré a vous en doit estre rendu,
Qui l'avez fait par grant amour revivre.

March 21st, 1901.

GASTON PARIS.

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In 1889 he was one of the staff on the *Écho de Paris* and at the same time wrote literary leaders (never republished) for the *Événement*. Then, after publishing his tales in the *Journal* he was on the editorial staff of the *Mercure de France*.

From 1894 to 1900 he published a number of stories and works, some of which were shaped and developed after the form of the romance:— *Cœur Double*, *Le Livre de Monelle*, (these two being widest known and best liked, perhaps,) *Le Roi en Masque d'Or*, *Mimes*, *Le Croisade des Enfants*,¹ *Spicilège*, *La Porte des Rêves*, and *Vies Imaginaires*. He has translated Daniel Defoe's novel, *Moll Flanders*, into French, also Hamlet in collaboration with Eugène Moraud; this was staged and played at Sarah Bernhardt's theatre in 1898.

¹ This has been translated by Henry Copley Greene (Boston, 1898).

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In September of 1900 M. Schwob married Miss Margaret Moreno, of the *Comédie Française*, whose talents as an actress are so thoroughly recognized in France and who, likewise, lives in literature as the *creatrice* of Verlaine's *Les Uns et les Autres*, *L'Infidèle* of Georges de Porto-Riche, and *le Voile* by Georges Rodenbach.

M. Schwob is at present preparing a large work to be entitled: *Francois Villon and his Times* wherein the whole surroundings and the associates he mentions as having consorted with, whether foul or fair, will be made to live again before the eyes of the public.

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